

MARKETING

Rebranding can revive your business

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Rebranding is not a Band-Aid and is not a one-size-fits-all solution.

Your valuable brand equity takes time to accrue and it should not be squandered lightly and without good reason.

So, why rebrand your company?

Rebranding may be the key to getting your business back on track.

Rebranding is rarely a sign of weakness. It is more often a sign of a company in tune with its customers and its market.

Most successful companies, from Fortune 500 to startups, rebrand.

As we explained [previously](#):

A brand is much more than the name and logo of a business.

Your company's brand is the sum total of the experience your customers and prospects have with your company.

A good brand communicates what your company does and how it does it. A good brand also establishes trust and credibility with your prospects and customers.

Some businesses fail to make conscious, intentional choices about their branding and live to regret it later. Others make intentional branding choices, but over time, for one reason or another, those choices no longer serve the business well.

Brands get off track. It happens.

But when your brand and your actual business do not align, that is bad news.

So, when your brand fails to live up to your expectations and you are losing to the competition, a rebrand could help you turn things around.

What is a rebrand?

A rebrand involves changing the brand identity business or corporate image of a company or organization.

Here is a more [thorough overview of what rebranding is and how to pull it off successfully](#), for those interested in a deeper analysis.

But in a nutshell, rebranding involves developing a new [brand identity](#) to replace an existing one.

When is rebranding a good idea?

If you find your business in one of the following situations, read on for strategic and tactical insights that will help you assess whether your existing business brand is hurting you and steps to rebrand.

1. Your brand does not communicate what you do

Does your brand make it clear what your business actually does?

In today's crowded market, it can be hard to find a strong business name that is not already taken. So, many businesses compromise on clarity in favor of availability.

And, when your name does not immediately communicate anything relevant about your business you have two options:

1. Change your business name
2. Just muddle through until your business falls apart

If your brand does not successfully communicate what your business does, that is a major problem. Your audience needs to easily see how you can benefit them. If they do not, they will walk on by without a second glance.

If this sounds like your business, then rebranding may be the right tool for setting your business back on the right path.

Rebranding tips:

- Choose a name that communicates what your consumers can expect from your business. This can be tough. So, if you need help brainstorming names that are clever, memorable, and that communicate the important information, consider seeking outside help.
- If you cannot find a name that truly says it all, consider adding a catchy tagline to your brand name to provide the additional clarification needed.
- If you change your business name, you must invest in a new custom logo and [Web site design](#) to flesh out this new identity.

2. Your brand is not aligned with your actions

Your brand consists of more than your business name, logo and brand colors.

As we mentioned above, your brand is also defined by what your business says and does, and your customers' experiences and perceptions.

If your actions and your brand identity do not match such as [Chipotle serving GMO foods](#) when its brand is built around "food with integrity" then your prospects and customers *will notice*.

And, when your brand does not seem to line up, it sets off red flags for consumers.

People trust things that can be relied on. And an inconsistent business cannot be relied upon. Sending conflicting or mixed messages is a great way to drive away customers and prospects.

If your business's actions and brand identity do not align, then rebranding can be your business's saving grace.

Rebranding tips:

- Develop a new brand identity that authentically aligns with the reality of your business.
 - Invite your customers to help guide your rebranding process. Integrate feedback from their experiences into your new brand.
 - Gather ideas from all levels of your organization not just the top. The people whose feet are on the ground moving your business forward every day have valuable insight into the reality of your business. This

insight will ensure your new brand tracks with what's really going on.

- Consider your existing values and strengths, as well as the user experience, when defining your new brand.
- If your business is not living up to its brand promises and it *should be*, work on aligning your business to the standards of your brand and not the other way around.

3. You need to overcome a poor reputation

A poor reputation deserved or not can be an anchor dragging your business down.

Whether your business is embroiled in a social or political scandal, questionable business practices, or simple financial struggles, revenue is bound to fall.

A business ignores a bad brand reputation at its peril. Something must be done to remedy the issue and turn the tides.

But, as mentioned before, rebranding is not a Band-Aid. And rebranding to "pave over" a bad reputation is never really truly successful. However, rebranding *can play an important role* as part of an overall strategy committing to positive change.

If your business is dogged by a nasty reputation, rebranding can be a life preserver.

Rebranding tips:

- Create a new public face to represent the future of your business. This includes, at a minimum, a new logo and Web site. Your new brand appearance will serve as a visual signifier that you are changing directions.
- In cases like this, a name change may seem like an attempt to avoid taking ownership of past mistakes. So, keep your name and tweak the rest of your brand.
- Remember to create new policies that support your commitment to your new brand path. Failing to follow through beyond a new logo and Web site will undermine your rebrand and make your new position hollow.
- Embrace new brand messaging that emphasizes your new position and policies.

4. You are focused on the wrong audience

Businesses occasionally find that their audience is not who they thought it was.

Sometimes there is a misunderstanding of the appropriate consumer audience from the get-go. Or for older, established businesses, their audience evolves over time and it becomes necessary for the brand to evolve with them.

But whatever the reason, if your brand does not resonate with your appropriate audience, your business will suffer.

So, if you find that your business is struggling because your brand was designed to communicate with an audience that is no longer relevant, it is time to remove that friction. Correct course and rebrand.

Rebranding tips:

- Really do your homework this time keep an open mind and research, research, research to find your true audience.
- Determine why your business is resonating with this audience. And find the points of overlap between your business's authentic identity and the traits, values and messages to which this audience will respond.
- Use these shared touch points to develop a new authentic visual brand that will appeal to this new audience. Depending on your situation, this may require a full rebrand or just mild adjustments.

5. You need to adjust to new technology or disruptions in your industry

The world around us is evolving faster than ever before.

The Internet redefined the way we do business. Then mobile wireless devices revolutionized the world yet again. It is only a matter of time before the next big shift.

When the reality in which your business functions fundamentally changes, your business must respond in kind. And these reality-shaping disruptions are happening more and more frequently as technology and your competitors

evolve.

If your brand is perceived as inflexible or ill equipped to survive in its new landscape, then it will likely fail.

For instance, IBM started life as the **Computing-Tabulating-Recording Company**. It rebranded as International Business Machines shortly after. The name IBM has proven more flexible as technology has grown than the ultra-specific "Computing-Tabulating-Recording Company."

If you want to survive like IBM, be smart and rebrand when a changing landscape calls for it.

And remember that rebranding can occur on a spectrum.

At one end, there is the mild visual tweak to an existing brand logo think Google's 2015 sans serif logo update.

At the other end, there is the complete from-the-ground-up rebrand with a new **company name**, new **company logo design**, new overall visual branding, and brand messaging.

Rebranding is not an all-or-nothing proposition. Different situations may call for a more or less-involved rebranding strategy.

Rebranding tips:

- Choose a new brand identity that leaves room for business development and growth. Avoid ultra-specific names and too-literal logos.
- Be mindful of your competition when developing your new brand. Emphasize aspects of your business that will differentiate you from the pack.
- After rebranding, embrace incremental changes that keep your brand on track with current technologies and trends to avoid becoming disconnected again.

6. You are made invisible by a generic brand

Is your business forgettable?

Is your brand name generic? Your logo a meaningless icon?

The best brands are grounded in an authentic identity and unique value proposition. If your brand does not tell your audience anything about who your business is or what you stand for, that is a major handicap for your business to overcome.

Businesses without a strong brand identity are utterly forgettable. And they have a much harder path forward than a strongly branded business because consumers simply will not remember or care about them.

If your business does not come to mind when consumers need your product or service, you will not get their business.

So, if your business has a great product and a strong team, but you are still failing, look hard at your brand and consider trying a new direction. A more unique and authentic brand is key to saving your business.

Rebranding tips:

- If your brand is truly generic, start over from scratch to give your business its best chance for success. Your rebrand plan should include a new business name, logo, brand colors, fonts, Web site and brand messaging.
- Look inward to find the aspects of your business that are most essential to making you who you are. These core values and personality traits should guide and anchor your new brand.
- Avoid meaningless or overused visual branding trends. And, do not use logo generators they only churn out more generic logos. Instead, opt for a thoughtful, custom design that puts your business' unique identity front and center.
- Do not be shy about rebranding even established products when you **design new products**. Apple, one of the most successful companies on the planet, will sometimes rebrand its line of products in response to new products or market feedback. It did this most recently, for example, by removing "Air" from the iPad line of products.
- Do not rebrand in a vacuum let the world know. Develop new marketing materials to launch and support your new brand. Consider a relaunch party emphasizing your new core brand identity.

REBRANDING IS NOT a cure-all.

But when wisely applied in the right situations, it may just save your business.

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